The Mountain Lion of the Rocky Mountains
Bailey Puls, age 9
Presidio School • Ms. Cohn
Grand Prize–Art–Category 2
This book is dedicated to 2016 Living River of Words Teachers of the Year:
Susan Cohn – Presidio School
and
Robert Mayer – DeGrazia Elementary School
And all the teachers and parents/guardians that promote and support the integration of science and the arts while creating opportunities for children to connect with nature.

Living River of Words 2016 – 2017 Traveling Exhibit Schedule

April 16 – May 30, 2016
Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Branch Library • 7800 N. Schisler Dr.

June 4 – July 6, 2016
Agua Caliente Park – Ranch House Art Gallery • 12325 E. Roger Rd.

July 9 – July 31, 2016
Martha Cooper Branch Library • 1377 N. Catalina Ave.

August 2 – August 31, 2016
Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library • 530 N. Wilmot Rd.

September 2 – September 30, 2016
Joel Valdez Main Library • 101 N. Stone Ave.

October 2 – November 11, 2016
Dusenberry-River Branch Library • 5605 E. River Rd., #105

November 15, 2016 – January 9, 2017
Mission Branch Library • 3770 S. Mission Rd.

January 11 – February 5, 2017
Valencia Branch Library • 202 W. Valencia Rd.

February 7 – March 10, 2017
Quincie Douglas Branch Library • 1585 E. 36th St.
**Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science**

*Living River of Words (LROW)* sets the stage for learning, inspires science inquiry, and excites creativity. The cycle begins with teachers who invite *LROW* arts and science instructors to their classrooms. Students are introduced to the concept of watersheds and study wetland habitats through a multi-disciplinary series of science investigations and the practice of poetry and visual arts. After exploring these topics, children ages 5–19 have the opportunity to share their impressions with entries of poetry and/or visual art to *Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest*. In these pages you see the award winning youth poetry and art works that are the result of the field trips, school residencies, and independent study.

*Living River of Words* is a regional coordinator providing local support for the national River of Words. Several dedicated teachers in Pima County, Arizona brought their classes on outdoor excursions to the Santa Cruz River or spent a day by the pond at Agua Caliente Park to learn about watersheds and wetlands habitats.

**Our field study sites – the lower Santa Cruz River and Agua Caliente Park**

Thanks to the release of highly treated wastewater into the riverbed the Santa Cruz River in northwest Tucson and Marana, the river is alive with perennial flows, lush trees lining the river banks, and diverse wildlife. Effluent in this reach of the Santa Cruz River is not new; two wastewater treatment plants have been operating on this section of the river since the 1970s. What has changed is the quality of the effluent being released. Pima County recently completed the upgrade of the two wastewater treatment plants. The upgrade significantly improved the quality of water released into the river, a key ingredient for a healthier river. The river now attracts walkers, bikers, and is a popular birding destination form the Sweetwater Wetlands to the Marana Flats. The Living River Project aims to gauge conditions of this valuable ecosystem and track the impacts of our community investment. *Living River of Words* plays a role in the broader Living River Project by introducing students, teachers and parents to the lower Santa Cruz River. While at the river students conduct water quality tests, record wildlife sightings, and survey riparian vegetation, using methods that
mirror the Living River Project indicator assessments. A visiting poet or artist spends time with the students by the river to guide their journaling and drawing in preparation for poetry writing and artwork back in the classroom.

Pima County’s Agua Caliente Park offers a natural spring and pond teeming with life. Situated at the base of the Santa Catalina Mountains, Agua Caliente Park is a popular destination for bird watching or a family picnic by the pond. The education center at the park offers amenities for the student field study trips. As with the Santa Cruz River study site, while at the park on a LROW field study trip the students take water samples from the pond to conduct water quality tests and study under the microscope. They also spend time journaling, sketching and recording their observations to inform their poetry writing and art work.

Perhaps you too will feel the richness and wonder of these special places through the eyes of the Living River of Words 2016 award winning youth poets and artists.

We thank the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pima County Regional Flood Control District, Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation, Pima County Communications Office, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, The Friends of Agua Caliente Park, and individual community donors for funding the Living River Project. This partnership made possible the continuation of the environmental science, poetry, and art residencies for students to prepare entries to the Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest.

Thank you!

Many thanks to the community partners, school administrators, teachers, science, poetry and art instructors, judges, and graphic designers that worked diligently to bring Living River of Words through the annual cycle of activities: Yajaira Gray, Wendy Burroughs, Jeffrey Babson, Sandy Reith, Julie Strom, Gavin Troy, Carolyn King, Doris Evans, Rebecca Seiferle, Kimi Eisele, Josh Schachter, Brian Powell, Bret Muter, Leia Maahs, Randy Metcalf, Gerry Loew, Edie Price, Helen Wilson, and NRPR interns Esperanza Zepeda, Selena Madrigal, Arturo Valdenegro, and Nikolas Espinosa.
**The Tortoise and The Rattlesnake**

The rattlesnake is fighting with a tortoise in the rain.  
He likes to eat eggs.  
He is standing up.  
He has scary eyes.  
He smells with his tongue.

Joel Amavizca, age 6  
*Holladay Elementary School • Ms. Martin*  
*Grand Prize—Poetry—Category 1*

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**Everything is Running Down**

Everything is running  
down the path of the moonlight  
in the earth’s sleep.  
The fast hours run down the stream.  
The doves dream.  
Everything is running  
down the path of moonlight;  
the ducks, turtles and toads.

Troy Chabot, age 8  
*Agua Caliente Elementary School • Ms. Gwozdz*

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**I Am**

I am the river going through the flow of life  
I am an otter swimming with my kids and wife  
I am the moss on the wall  
I am the river cane about to fall  
I am a fly about to die sitting on the road  
I am a hawk swooping down to eat a horny toad  
I am a kid learning about the water cycle  
Watching the flow of life go by like a bicycle

Isaiah J. Montoy, age 11  
*Ochoa Community Magnet School • Ms. Elvick*
Used to Be

Water flows.
Plants grow.
Birds alight on branches.

Convenient lies disguising an inconvenient truth.
The faded memory of a river.
A river that brought life
now an empty wash.

We chose lawns and swimming pools.

We complain that the river is gone.
We pump water back into the land but only after we have used it.

But water is not a river.
Airplanes are not birds.
Being alive is not living.

A promise to return what we have taken.
A fated apology to the land.

We are child knocking over a towers of blocks.
We scream and cry when the blocks fall.

We try to build the tower up again but it is never the same.

But children learn.
We are learning.

Perhaps next time we will leave the tower standing.

Hannah Providence, age 16
City High School • Ms. Acosta
Grand Prize – Poetry – Category 4
**Jackrabbit**

Fire-red ears  
Beige fur  
Yellow eyes  
Curved whiskers  
Drinks the melting snow

*Adam Mohamed Omar Makram, age 6*  
*Sewell Elementary School • Ms. Martin*

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**The White Green River**

The white green river  
gribbles like a gravel into a pool –  
wsshhh!  
I see the small green leaf  
and say, “Hello!”  
I see a bumpy leaf  
swooshing into a pool –  
wsshhh!  
The black beetle walks  
around in the smooth, smooth sand.

*Christian Rubio, age 9*  
*Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos*  
*Grand Prize–Poetry–Category 2*

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**Sparkling Water**

Drifting through our world  
During the rise of day and the show of night  
Through cracks of our dry desert land  
To care for every living creature

*Alexie Gonzalez, age 10*  
*Mesquite Elementary School • Ms. Collins*
**Wish Washer**

The river washed my wishes away,  
Where did they go?  
Did they go to the tourist,  
Who is watching the hawk?  
Did it go to the hawk,  
Who is stalking his prey,  
Who jumped the bushes?  
Did it go to the bush,  
Who provides yummy berries for the birds?  
Did it go to the bird,  
Who landed right in front of the little girl?  
Did it go to the little girl,  
Who was wondering where her wish went?

*Victoria Holloway, age 12*  
*DeGrazia Elementary School • Ms. Mirlocca*  
*Grand Prize—Poetry—Category 3*

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**A Summer Rain Storm**

On a bright summer morning  
The clouds started blowing strongly in the wind  
to say a storm was coming.  
The rain started plip plopping on the pond  
as if there were lots of rocks being flung into the water.  
The rattlesnake silently slithered into a rabbit hole  
to seek shelter and to have a tasty snack.  
After the rain everything was still.  
The saguaro had its drink.  
The rivers were full.  
The puddles were thick.  
The storm was over as  
the animals came out hiding.

*Addyson Keeling, age 9*  
*Bloom Elementary School • Ms. Martin*
Gambel’s Night

It was a stormy night, rain drops falling, lightning striking and clouds swiftly moving around the sky. Gambel’s Quail was wearing his feathery hat. Rain was pouring on him because he forgot his black and white coat. He ran until he bumped into Spanish Scorpion. Scorpion found a palo verde tree and invited Gambel into the cavity of the trunk. They stayed there for the night. In the morning the sun was shining at the circle shaped rainbow.

Violeta Fernández, age 8
Sewell Elementary • Ms. Martin

Rain

A coyote
Danced in the rain
During the monsoon
Up in the mountain
To cool off

Riley Blute, age 10
Mesquite Elementary School • Ms. Collins

The River

The river sounds
Like a bird tweeting
It smells like mint
The air blooms into
The flowers. The flowers are blooming and floating

Giselle Cardenas, age 8
Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos
Hummingbirds in the Rain
Elizabeth Crandell, age 7
Henry Elementary • Ms. Martin
Beautiful Lands
Anmalina Whillock, age 6
Roadrunner Elementary • Ms. Carroll
Grand Prize—Art—Category 1

Magnificent Mountain Lion
Christian Jack Badinger, age 8
Erickson Elementary • Ms. Martin
Turtle Desert Land
Jonah Alcaraz, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Powers

Bird’s Eye View
Eduardo Lemus, age 18
Amphitheater High School • Ms. Hollman
Grand Prize–Art–Category 4
Water in the Desert
Daniel Yom, age 7
Manzanita Elementary • Ms. Green
The Limited Water Resources

Hannah Bae, age 14

Basis Oro Valley • Ms. Yom
Desert Animals
Ela Sainz, age 7
Gale Elementary • Ms. Nguyen

Disappearing Water
Gayatri Kaimal, age 10
Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald
Living River of Words Project
Bivika Adhikari, age 10
Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald

Beautiful Desert
Kira Anderson, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Gwozdz
Curious Owlets
Gospava Conley, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Minninger
Desert Beauty
Jayden Dwight, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Cohn
Misty Wings
Lucia Meinig-Reeves, age 11
Paulo Freire Freedom School • Ms. Mohr-Felsen
Grand Prize–Art–Category 3

Bio Cycle
Klay Leh, age 16
Amphitheater High School • Ms. Hollman
**Cold Winter Morning**
Vanessa Mora, age 11  
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer

**Sunset Scavenger**
Raine Ugstad, age 11  
Paulo Freire Freedom School • Ms. Mohr-Felsen
Waiting
Jocelynn Garcia, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary • Ms. Mirlocca
River Bird
Lucas Knoll, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Cohn
Desert Rain
Madilyn Hanna, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer

Stream of Hope
Malya Hersha, age 11
Basis Tucson North • Ms. Vonier
Myles Walker, age 12
Paulo Freire Freedom School • Ms. Mohr-Felsen

Desert of Life
Renee Li, age 10
Basis Tucson North • Mr. McDonald
Desert
Rebeca Contreras Cortez, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Powers
The Watering Hole
Simone McCarthy, age 10
Basis Tucson North • Ms. Vonier
Colorful Desert
Alicia Romero, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary • Ms. Johnson
The Desert and the River
Stella Xu, age 8
Presidio School • Ms. Cohn

Gabriel Mahtapene, age 11
Hollinger K-8 • Ms. Denson
Grand Prize—Photography—Category 3
Jesus Peña, age 11
Hollinger K-8 • Ms. Denson

Samantha Brownell, age 11
Hollinger K-8 • Ms. Denson
**I Am the River**

I am the river with no pain
No sorrow
Swimming with an otter
Providing with my mother
And my long line of rivers
Waiting to be the best
At what I do
I sleep under a blanket of stars
With the moon as a light
To guide me through my day
And a cloud as a pillow
I sleep dreaming of one day
Being a swirl of stars
A universe of water
A graceful leap of water
There is no limit to what I can be
As long as I believe

*Zaxarie Silva, age 10*
*Ochoa Community Magnet School • Ms. Elvick*

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**Katydid**

I found a leaf
I found a leaf but something was moving
The legs on the leaf moved
it was a katydid
it had six legs
it was walking on a stick
it was an insect
it was green
I think it eats plants
I touched the katydid
It was walking on my palms

*Ba`ag Wilson, age 8*
*Borton Magnet School • Ms. Cavazos*
River
One sunny morning I looked out the window
and saw a river
Water had shining rocks
I wanted to keep the rocks
so I decided to make my own river
and it had shining rocks and crystals
and I took the rocks from the other river
I got a shovel to make my own river
I wanted to make a river to show my family
How cool my river will look like
If my river could talk it would say
Please take of me

Jasmine Bernal, age 9
Ochoa Community Magnet School • Ms. Selden

The Gila Monster
As the long venomous Gila monster
slowly crawls out of his hole,
he sets out to find a lake of water to drink from.
While the saguaro protects his house,
he safely leaves his babies behind with
the protection from the tall green prickly cactus.
As he gets through the rocky plain,
he finds a diamondback snake who took over the lake.
He fights off the snake, takes a drink and leaves.
When he gets back to his hole,
which was protected by the trustworthy cactus,
he sees his babies alive and awake.

Abraham Alvarez, age 10
Sewell Elementary School • Ms. Martin
Shivering Trees

Rain is like air, is like an owl.
The mountains look like fire.
Deep in a dream, the perfect hawk
will close eyes to sleep and sings
to the river trees.
Shivering clear together.

Ivy Morrison, age 7
Agua Caliente Elementary School • Ms. Johnson

The Finch

He climbs the sky to see himself fly
To see the river and the wind it was for him
He was free to be all his life his wings to the wind as a knife
River robbed the sky of colors his life was like no other
He felt like he was brave and free but was he only trying to flee
The ground from which he broke free
As he whistled a song on the breeze

Briant Johnson, age 11
DeGrazia Elementary • Mr. Mayer
**The Desert Owl**

The desert owl in the sunny morning
was very hungry and quickly glided to a nearby saguaro.
The saguaro was holding lots of water from the desert rain.
The clouds started to come in and made the curvy ground
look like water from the ocean splashing, splish, splash.
The flowers in the distance were blue and white
and looked like butterflies and berries.

*Aaliyah Thomas, age 10
Bloom Elementary • Ms. Martin*

**The Storm**

The cliff is so still,
one day you will see it in your eyes.
When monsoon comes
the trees will move,
it will be windy.
Discover it.
One day you will have
the courage to do it.
When it is night,
you will see an owl.
You will have the owl
in your dreams.
Over the night,
imagine that owl
in that thunderstorm.

*Drew Hartigan, age 8
Agua Caliente Elementary School • Ms. Johnson*
The Owl

The wind howled in the night sky.
Bright yellow eyes shone in the darkness.
Watching…
Every scurry of living things is observed.
Wings flap as it takes flight in the wind.
Hooting a call to its mate nearby,
Scattering…
of mice and rodents on the run.
The Rattlesnake stays coiled next to the saguaro.
Perched up high, above, the ever watchful owl…
Waiting!

Jocelynn Garcia, age 12
DeGrazia Elementary School • Ms. Mirlocca

The Desert Tortoise

In the stormy night the desert tortoise,
protected by his coated shell, floated into a waterfall
Kaboom…He fell landing with his head inside
his shell, surviving just by a little.
He slowly walked in the wet night back to his den.
The next morning the flowers grew,
and the weeds washed away.
It was a perfect day.
Wiggly worms and cautious curious caterpillars
could be seen in every direction.

Allie Vogelsberg, age 8
Sewell Elementary School • Ms. Martin
The Whispering Wind
I hear the wind whispering,  
to the willow trees,  
telling them the stories,  
of everything she’s seen.  
I hear the wind whispering,  
to the river reeds,  
bragging about every city she’s seen.  
If you look closely at the water’s edge,  
the midges are squirming and butting heads.  
Why can’t we just open our eyes a little longer?

Madilyn Hanna, age 11  
DeGrazia Elementary School • Mr. Mayer

The Great Saguaro
As a tiny Elf owl sits on my arm  
the wind howls throughout the desert  
Whish! Wooo! Swish!  
He awakens to the sound of a scorpion  
scurrying along the sand  
Scritch! Scratch! Scritch! Scratch!  
I stand tall in the moonlight  
forming an eerie shadow  
as a bat drinks my nectar  
A bobcat prowls around me  
bolting into the moonlight  
A pack of coyotes howls Awooo! Howl!  
The wind sways  
and rocks the leaves of the mesquite tree  
Whish! Wooo! Swish!  
The sun ascends above the desert,  
day is nearing

Sara Gorny, age 9  
Manzanita Elementary School • Ms. Fisher
For more information about Living River of Words: Youth Arts and Science contact:
Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Environmental Education
Phone: (520) 615-7855
Email: eeducation@pima.gov
Website: www.pima.gov/nrpr

All of the Living River Reports and associated documents for the lower Santa Cruz River are available for download at the Sonoran Institute website www.tiny.cc/lscr

Photo: Doris Evans

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Friends of Agua Caliente Park

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
Regional Flood Control District
Office of Sustainability and Conservation
Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department
Pima County Public Library
Communications Office

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